

# Thumb Octagon Barn News



## Home of the Thumb Agricultural Museum

*Our mission is to maintain a volunteer group of Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn involved in the restoration and preservation of the Barn Complex as an educational tool preserving our rural and agricultural history for the benefit of our visitors.*

WINTER 2015

## Annual Meeting, Banquet & Benefit Auction

*Nancy Hrabcak, Chairperson*

Here is just a little bit of history & background. Since 1997, the Friends have had an annual meeting to recap the year's activities and to honor people and businesses from the area that have played a major role in helping us obtain our goals and mission. In the beginning it was held on the second Tuesday of February at the Fire Hall in Gagetown in place of our regular monthly meeting. Over time it grew from a meeting with only a few tasty snacks to a dinner meeting and benefit auction that helps to raise funds for our continuing restoration efforts. Each year businesses, service organizations and individuals are recognized for their contribution. In 2002 the "Barn Member of the Year" award was initiated.

This year's Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, April 11, 2015** at the **V.F.W. Hall in Cass City, MI** beginning at **5 p.m.** with dinner at **5:45 p.m.** prepared and served by **McDonald's Food & Family Center of Bad Axe**. Following dinner there will be a short business meeting, election of officers and a look back at our accomplishments in 2014 and recognition of our 2015 Barn Friend of the Year.

After the short meeting the fun will begin with our **Benefit Auction** conducted by **Osentoski Realty Co. and Auctioneering**. **Dave & Marty Osentoski** will once again be handling the Auction. They are amazing in their enthusiasm and

ability to get the crowd bidding to bring in the greatest amount for our organization.

The success of the Auction depends on attendees bringing, that night, items for the Silent and Live Auctions. Items should be in good saleable condition and can include antiques, humorous items, mystery boxes, baked goods, crafts and items for everyday use. So please start gathering that something special for our Auction. Nancy wants to be certain that folks not only bring the big items for the live auction but also gather up stuff for the Silent Auction.

A **reservation form** has been included with this newsletter and we hope you will consider joining the Friends for a fun-filled evening as we begin our scheduled calendar of Events for 2015. We do need your reservation by April 1<sup>st</sup> so that an accurate number of participants can be passed on to the caterer. If you have any questions, please call Chairman, **Nancy Hrabcak** at **989-551-6495** or email her at [njbraun15@yahoo.com](mailto:njbraun15@yahoo.com).



**Dave Osentoski** is looking a bidder in the eye to encourage them to increase their bid. The energy that Dave and Marty put into our auction is to be admired. They put forth so much genuine enthusiasm for each item that they get folks bidding up and up. We thank them for volunteering their time and talent for all these years.

Last year, **Shelley Corsini** of Bad Axe, donated four Annette Himstedt dolls for our Auction. Shelly is a highly regarded doll restorer and these dolls have been part of her doll collection for years and she thought that it was time to part with them and what better place than the Thumb Octagon Barn. We thank her for this generous donation and now Shelley encourages folks to search for that special something that they might have to donate for our Auction.



**When:** Saturday, April 11, 2015 beginning at 5 p.m.

**Where:** V.F.W. Hall in Cass City, MI

**What:** Dinner at 5:45

prepared by McDonald's Food and Family Center.

**Benefit Auction** conducted by Osentoski Auctioneering  
**Dave & Marty Osentoski**

**Why:** To join the Friends for a fun evening of fellowship  
and fund-raising for the on-going improvement  
of the Thumb Agricultural Museum

### Executive Committee

**President**  
**Rose Putnam**

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**  
**Martin Kubacki**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**  
**Gerald Auten**

**Treasurer**  
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**Recording Secretary**  
**Ardis Monroe**

**Corresponding  
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**Marilyn DeSimpelare**

**Past President**  
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**Grant Writing  
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**Dennis Anderson**

**Purdy Home  
Chairman**  
**Marilyn Phillips**

**Museum Committee**  
**Douglas Monroe**

**Grounds Chairman**  
**Louis Wehrman**

Contributions to the Friends of the Thumb Octagon Barn, a 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit organization, are tax deductible according to the IRS guidelines.

**Web Site**  
[www.thumboctagonbarn.org](http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org)

*Letter From the President*  
**FRIENDS of the THUMB OCTAGON BARN**  
**Rose M. Putnam**



Dear Friends:

2015 is well on its way to being a very exciting year. The theme this year is "Trees are our Friends" and I'm coming to discover that something so simple as a tree, which we sometimes take for granted here in our great state of Michigan, can be so exciting. Our great group of volunteers, and many are former educators, have taken this theme and brought it to new heights - no pun intended. We are very fortunate to be in the middle of a state game area, which fosters so many varieties of trees. Did you know there is a stand of "American Chestnut" trees just a few miles north of the barn? These trees are becoming rare. For those in the know, this is the 71<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Smokey Bear whose mission is to educate the US public about the dangers of forest fires. Smokey will be paying several visits to the barn this year. Be sure to read all about it in this edition of the newsletter. Do you know what Clara Barton's contribution was to the Thumb back in the late 1880s? Come and find out. There will be interests for both youth and adults all over the site.

With a very generous anonymous donation, the Grain Elevator will have a new addition. We are greatly anticipating the ability to tell the story of grain in greater detail with more hands on opportunities.

We are also proud to announce that Phase 2 of the Thumb Quilt Trail will be coming this year. If you haven't seen the "Michigan Royal Star" out in front of the barn, please make the trip to see it. We thank Paula Gardner & Ardis Monroe for spending more than a hundred hours carefully painting the design on their chosen square. This is just one of the 21 squares in the Thumb. This project is sponsored by the "Friends". See more information in the newsletter.

Of course, we have many things to repair and improve in some of the buildings and more displays to complete in the barn. There is always something new and exciting going on.

We hope to see you all at Fall Family Days, but before that is here, why not attend the Annual Meeting/Dinner/Auction on April 11<sup>th</sup>? It's a great way to see all your friends after the long, cold winter months.

*Your Friend and President,*  
**Rose**

## School Tours 2015

*Diane Rapson Gabil, Chairperson*

School Tours 2015 are scheduled for **Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup> and Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>** by reservation only. The guided tours begin at 8:30 a.m. each day with the last tours starting at 1:00 p.m. Educators will decide which areas they wish to have their students attend a month prior to attending in May. Most guided tours are four hours but shorter tours can be scheduled to meet the students' and transportation needs. Currently there are **one thousand students** signed up for this exceptional, educational experience for Pre-Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. There are no openings on Friday with just a few time periods available on Wednesday & Thursday. We feel that we could accommodate another 200 students but that would be the limit. Educators are urged to sign up for School Tours by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

It is suggested that groups attending have one chaperone for every 8 students, but more are welcomed. Cost is a \$2.00 donation for each child and each chaperone attending. There is no food for sale on site so visitors will need to bring their own sack lunch that they will be able to enjoy at designated picnic areas. There are porta-johns on site. All visitors are asked to dress appropriately for the weather as we continue with our schedule regardless of inclement weather.

## Thumb Quilt Trail

What great fun it is to follow the quilt trail and discover all 21 of the beautiful 8' by 8' framed wooden quilt squares in the Thumb. The quilt trail was established to promote tourism and the appreciation of barns, to tell the story of a small agricultural community and to promote the art, craft and legacy of quilt making in the Thumb Region.

**Paula Gardner**, Cass City, and **Ardis Monroe**, Gagetown are both talented and enthusiastic quilters who spent over a hundred hours carefully painting their assigned quilt square, **Michigan Royal Star**. The pattern is intricate and the colors bright and cheerful. It's actually the entire quilt rather than just a single square of many to make up a quilt. We thank them for all the time that they spent completing this very beautiful quilt square. By the time they finished they were both anxious to get back to their own regular size quilts.



One of the areas that students can visit is Children's Activities that is equipped with all sorts of interesting things for the students to do that were typical during the 1920s and 40s. All ages love to try their luck at walking with the stilts. Believe me it looks much easier than it is.

We can always use more volunteers for a variety of jobs before/during and after School Tours. Please contact **Joan Merchant** our new School Tours Volunteers Chairperson at 989-872-3395. We thank **Norma Wallace** who handled this responsibility so well for all these many years and welcome Joan to this task.

Our theme will be evident in all areas of School Tours. Students will learn about Smokey Bear, Johnny Appleseed, Clara Barton and the big fire of 1881 in the Thumb.

**School Tours 2015 meetings are held at 12:30 until 2:30 p.m. at Rawson Memorial Library in Cass City on the following Wednesdays, March 18<sup>th</sup> and April 29<sup>th</sup> 2015. Please come and join us.**



The completed quilt square is mounted on a frame and is attached to the Thumb Octagon Barn Agricultural Museum sign in front of the Barn. The quilt square can easily be seen from the road. We thank **Richard Stacer**, Ubyly, **Wayne Lenton**, Ubyly, **Jack Hill**, Marlette and **Norm Parker**, Cass City for completing this project. Also thank you to **Dale Will** and for the use of a DTE truck for helping with the installation. Thank you to **Tuscola County Community Foundation & Huron County Community Foundation** for the grants to support the construction of the squares and the funds to market the Trail. Drive by sometime and take a look and, best of all, follow the Trail. You can get more information at the quilt square website, [thumbquilttrail.com](http://thumbquilttrail.com) or like us on Facebook at [thumbquilttrail](https://www.facebook.com/thumbquilttrail).  
*(Picture courtesy of David Jaroch.)*



# The Purdy Home Christmas Open House

Marilyn Phillips, Chairperson

In 1919 Mr. James Purdy hired local builders **John & George Munro** to build "a wonderful home on his Mud Lake Estate" for his family. At that time the family lived in the nearby town of Gagetown but James had begun buying property out in the country in search of providing electricity to the rural communities. James, Cora and their two daughters moved into their new home from the small town of Gagetown on May 19, 1922. The home has twelve rooms and three bathrooms. Through the years this once magnificent home had fallen into a sad state of disrepair. Starting in 1994, a group of dedicated volunteers have worked tirelessly to restore the Purdy Home back to its original grandeur. The House Committee, chaired by Marilyn Phillips, loves to show off this very beautifully restored home during our Events.

According to Cora's diaries, she loved decorating her home for Christmas with fresh boughs of greens and large red velvet ribbons. So **Marilyn Phillips**, House Chairperson, decided to plan our first Christmas Open House in 2012 and invited visitors to enjoy the holiday spirit by visiting this elegant home all decked out for the holidays. Marilyn and her committee decorated a few of the rooms that first year but since then others have been invited to select a room of their choice and decorate it. Prizes from our Sou-

venir Store were awarded for the most appropriate and artistically decorated rooms. The ladies who decorated a room or rooms are: **Patti Faist**, Frankenmuth, who selected the dining room and the striped bedroom, **Karen Schriber & Elna Kamrad**, Caro, selected the upstairs maid's bedroom and the hallway, **Rosemary Gaeth & Georgia Botka**, Unionville, decorated Florence's bedroom, **Sue Dawson**, Lapeer, for the past two years, decorated the upstairs bathroom and the green bedroom, **Chris Allen & Marie Clincke** of Cass City decorated the Sitting Room and **Marilyn Phillips**, Gagetown, decorated the Purdy bedroom on the first floor, the parlor including the stairway off the parlor, the kitchen and the Boy's Bedroom. Marilyn thanks these ladies for volunteering to decorate these rooms and she would also like to thank **Dorothy Sampson** of Kinde for making dozens of Christmas cookies.

Prizes were awarded as follows with a gift certificate to shop at our Souvenir Store.

1<sup>st</sup> **Patti Faist**, Frankenmuth -

\$30 gift certificate;

2<sup>nd</sup> **Rosemary Gaeth & Georgia Botka**, Unionville - \$25 gift certificate;

3<sup>rd</sup> **Karen Schriber & Elna Kamrad**, Caro - \$20 gift certificate

The photos on this page tell the story of the 2015 Christmas Open House.



**Patti Faist** of Frankenmuth was the first place winner for her decorating efforts in the dining room. Patti set the table with dishes that belonged to her Grandmother and Mother. She loves sharing these beautiful dishes and ornaments with others and most of all she feels that it is very important that these treasures be used. Patti even decorated the plate rail and, to be certain that she returned everything as she had found it, she took pictures and that made it very easy to put the items on the plate rail in their original location.



**Marilyn Phillips** is pictured with an oak, Kellogg brand, crank telephone and a 1925 phone directory from Renovo, Pennsylvania donated by Bryan & Janet Phillips of Dearborn, MI. The phone is on the East wall of the Sitting Room. **Marilyn is looking for a 1920's to 30's phone directory from Michigan's Thumb.**



**Karen Schriber and Elna Kamrad** of Caro decorated the maid's room and the hall just outside the room and received third place recognition for their efforts. Karen was quite excited that she had just recently found the dolls pictured in the buggy at a Doll Show in Columbus, Ohio just a few weeks ago. She freshened up the dolls completely and was delighted with their appearance. Karen was also quite proud of the Nativity Scene on top of the dresser that her Mother-in-law had hand painted.



As a means to raise funds for the every day needs of the Purdy Home, Marilyn suggested that visitors make a donation to help cover some of these expenses. Welcoming visitors and receiving their donations are **Karen Schriber** of Caro who decorated the upstairs maid's room and **Janice Arnold**, Unionville.



The **Peplinski Family** of Ubyly had seen the advertisements for the Christmas Open House at the Thumb Octagon Barn Purdy Home and thought it would be a nice family outing. They were very impressed with the Purdy Home and also enjoyed the tasty Christmas treats. Pictured from the left are: daughter **Madelyn**, Mother **Sandy**, daughter **Sarah** and Dad, **Jerry Peplinski**.

**Marilyn Phillips**, is shown (at left) in the first floor Master Bedroom of the Purdys with a mannequin wearing the wedding suit that James Purdy wore when he married Cora at the Tennant House Hotel in Cass City on August 30, 1894. The top hat is on loan from **Alex Paladi** of Deford. Believe it or not it is said that James wore his wedding suit for the celebration of their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

## Cora's Cleaning Crew

Marilyn Phillips is looking for people to help with the upkeep and cleaning of the Purdy Home during the months that we are open to the public. This is a big home and it needs "Cora's Cleaning Crew" to help with this job. **Call Marilyn at 989-665-0210** if you could become a member of the Cleaning Crew.



**Pauline Kelly** of Bay Port has been playing the dulcimer in the Purdy Home during our Events for the past fifteen years. Pauline played in the parlor one of the days of the Open House as did **Joyce Anderson** and **Vicki Vader**. **Sharron Patterson** of Lapeer played the harp one day and it was wonderful to fill the Purdy Home with the melodic sounds of Christmas Carols.



When Marilyn decorated the Parlor she was pleased to use the rocking chair that had belonged to **Eurista Purdy**, mother of James. The chair is in excellent condition and was donated by George, Jim and Scottie Wilson sons of **Carolyn Purdy Wilson** the youngest of James and Cora Purdy's daughters.



**Rosemary Gaeth and Georgia Botka**, Unionville, decorated Florence's upstairs bedroom. It was elegant and seemed very fitting for Florence who was an accomplished pianist and a refined lady. Breakfast in bed in this beautiful front, upstairs bedroom seemed very appropriate.



## 2015 Host Couples

We began our Host Couple program in 1999 when we recognized the importance of having people on site to greet visitors and conduct tours as well as provide security for our Agricultural Museum during the months that the site is open to the public. We have been so fortunate through the years to have very special folks come forward to provide this service for the Friends. This is not an easy job as one day can be unbelievably busy while others don't have anyone visiting. We thank them for the job that they do for us and for representing the Friends in such a positive manner.

Pictured on this page are our 2014 Host Couples and a comment or two about their experience.



**Ron (Too Tall) & Tammi Hensley**, Lehigh Acres, FL returned for a third year and spent most of the summer serving as hosts and very much enjoy the experience. "We love meeting all the people who come to visit and we've met some very interesting people. Our favorite thing to do is have a bonfire and make s'mores and visit and chat." The Friends are great people, very dedicated and hardworking and we are pleased to call them OUR FRIENDS."



**Gail and Duane Osbourn** from New Baltimore, MI have been hosting for a number of years but are uncertain that they will be able to continue for long visits because of some health issues. They may try some limited visits as Gail loves to plant the gardens around the site and then diligently maintains them. She does a great job planting, weeding and most importantly watering the various gardens and she worries about them when they are not there. Many commented on the beautiful flowers and that the grounds had never looked better so we hope the Osbourns will be back periodically to tend to the landscaping details on site.



**John & Carolyn Longmuir**, who list Box Elder, South Dakota as their home base were a host couple for the first time. When asked about their experience at the site, Carolyn said, "It is so peaceful and quiet. We came from the desert so this has been a welcomed relief. We love the site and all the animals that we have been able to see up close. I love giving tours and telling the story." John said, "The whole experience is grounding. It brings you back to your roots and feels so comfortable and relaxing. It takes me back to my early days with my grandfather who owned a duck farm."



**Tom & Carmen Colburn** who list their home base as Austin, TX have hosted for a couple of years. When they were coming for their initial visit, Tom checked out the website and he found it very informative and interesting. However, he said, "The Barn is a place that needs to be experienced. Until you walk in and take in the size and beauty you don't appreciate its magnificence. The video doesn't do it justice. It takes your breath away. No matter how often I go in the Barn, I have the same feeling." Carmen said, "When I go into the Barn I think it is magical. We have traveled a lot and this place stands out. I have never seen a building so beautiful as the Octagon Barn." You may wonder what the 50 to 80 degrees means on their sign. They want to always be able to go a place where the temperature never goes below 50 degrees or above 80 degrees.



**John & Carolyn Longmuir** loved keeping busy and volunteered to do tasks that needed doing over and above their conducting tours responsibilities. When the interior of the new storage room in the Munro Building needed painting, they volunteered to complete the project. They work together as a team and are very happy and proud of the finished product and had the job done in no time at all.



**Bill Hollingsworth and Betty Armstead** from Zephyrhills, FL, have been hosting for a number of years. They like to keep busy when they are hosting. Bill helps and does any number of jobs that need attention. Bill and Betty arranged a very attractive souvenir store in the Garage and spent considerable time selling our items to visitors. In 1999, Betty and her husband, the late **Ray Armstead**, were our very first Host Couple. Back then there were just the original buildings on site and they were in terrible condition. In fact the Armsteads wondered what they were protecting and never could have imagined that the buildings would be restored to such perfection and the Village created. Betty thinks of the Friends as her Barn Family. A very special thank you Bill and Betty for all your years of dedicated volunteer service to the Thumb Agricultural Museum.



**Arnold & Reita Maxfield** from Dade City, FL, a former host couple for many, many years until their health would no longer make it possible for them to continue to bring their unit up from Florida to be hosts. This summer they were up for several family gatherings and of course came to visit all their Friends at the Thumb Octagon Barn. Reita said, "We were proud of what we did as hosts and think we did a good job. We enjoyed everything especially meeting people." It was wonderful to be surprised by their visit and especially great to see them doing so well.

# 20<sup>th</sup> Fall Family Days 2015

*Martin Kubacki, Chairman*

Dear Friends,

Our Fall Family Days kickoff meeting will be held **March 10, 2015 at the Gagetown Fire Hall at 7:00 p.m.** The theme for this year's 20<sup>th</sup> FFD Event is **TREES ARE OUR FRIENDS**. **Denny Anderson & Dave Jaroch** are co-chairing our 2015 theme and are very excited and enthusiastic about this year's theme. We will have a very special guest this year, **SMOKEY BEAR**, who will be on the grounds both days. There will be many other exhibits relating to trees. We think it's going to be one exciting theme. We will also continue to have harvesting demonstrations and exhibits that are representing life on the farm as we have

done in the past. As we get closer to the September date, we will give you a rundown of the displays and demonstrations that we have planned.

This year's expense budget is set at \$45,000.00. As the Event gets bigger it requires more money to cover the advertising, tent rental, porta-johns, signage, insurance and supplies. Our Fall Family Days financial sponsors have been key to the success of this Event. We appreciate the continued support of those who have been sponsors through the years. If you or someone you know would like to be a sponsor please let us know by May 15. This will insure that the sponsor's name will appear in the various printed advertisements giving credit for their

financial backing. **We have included a sponsor form with the Newsletter for your convenience.**

Fall Family Days 2015 will be the weekend after Labor Day starting with our Fish Fry, Friday evening September 11, and the Fall Family Days Event, September 12 & 13. If you are really interested in getting involved as a volunteer this year call me at 989-551-0526 or if possible attend one of our planning meetings. You are all invited and we need you. Finally, I need someone to step up to help me co-chair this Event. If you are interested, please call me.

*God Bless & Keep Warm  
Martin, FFD CHAIRMAN*



**Dennis Anderson and David Jaroch** are planning all the different activities that they will have for our 2015 Events. They have many ideas and welcome others to join them in making this a very memorable theme.

thumb octagon celebrate their theme. As you know, I'm quite fond of trees especially apple trees. I'll be asking boys and girls that I met last year during school tours if they have planted any trees. I'll be working with our new guest, Smokey Bear, who works to prevent fires. I'll see you real soon at School Tours the first week in May and at Fall Family Days the weekend after Labor Day." If you have a chance, read a story about Johnny Appleseed and Smokey Bear to learn more about how you can help make all trees our friends. See you real soon at school tours the first week in May and Fall Family Days the weekend after Labor Day.

Johnny will have the responsibility of mentoring our special guest for our Events this year, Smokey Bear. According to Federal guidelines, Smokey must always be accompanied by his mentor who will do all the speaking and Smokey Bear will be giving hugs.

Following are a few facts that perhaps you didn't know about Smokey shared by Paul Bunyan.

To understand how Smokey Bear became associated with wildfire prevention, we must go back to World War II. On Decem-

## 2015 Theme – Trees are our Friends

*Dennis Anderson & David Jaroch, Co-chairmen*

**Dennis Anderson and Dave Jaroch** are teaming up to co-chair our theme for 2015, **Trees are our Friends**. In the fall of last year they presented a proposal for all of the related activities that they could integrate into every area of our Events. They have many plans and they are exciting.

Johnny Appleseed will be coming to Michigan again this year. In a recent conversation with Johnny, he said, "I'll be returning to the Upper Thumb of Michigan this year and helping the Thumb Oc-

**Trees are our Friends**. As

ber 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The following spring in 1942, a Japanese submarine surfaced near the coast of Southern California and fired near the Los Padres National Forest.

Americans throughout the country were shocked by the news that potential forest fires could be started. Protection of our forest from fire became a matter of national importance. The loss of our national resource could hurt our war efforts. In 1944 the Wartime Advertising Council decided to use an animal to carry the fire prevention message. Walt Disney agreed to lend the image of Bambi, for a year, to be used to carry the message. On August 9, 1944 a bear was chosen to be the spokesman for forest fire prevention. Artist Albert Staehle created Smokey, who was named after a well-known fire chief from New York City Fire Department named Smokey Joe Martin.

So who's who for our 2015 Theme **TREES ARE OUR FRIENDS**, **David Jaroch is Johnny Appleseed, Dennis Anderson is Paul Bunyan & Jerry Middaugh, a volunteer fireman from Caro, is Smokey Bear**. We thank them all for their participation in our Events and surely they will add a great deal to the fun at the Thumb Agricultural Museum this year. We'll be hearing more from Johnny and Smokey in future newsletters.

### MEMBERSHIP

Newsletters that have a membership form with **RENEWAL** written in **RED** are either past due or will be due before our next newsletter. If **FINAL NOTICE** is stamped on the form this means that this will be your **LAST REMINDER** to renew your membership before being **removed** from our mailing list. The levels of membership are: **Associate Membership** - \$5.00 and brings you our quarterly newsletter. **General Membership** - \$10.00 for an individual and \$15.00 for a family, which along with receipt of the newsletter gives you the right and opportunity to hold office. A membership form can be obtained from our website at [thumboctagonbarn.org](http://thumboctagonbarn.org). Also, when you receive notice that your membership needs to be renewed, please feel free to renew for more than one year and know that our records will reflect your wishes. It is important that you indicate how the money included is to be distributed and the total matches the amount of your check.

**Important notice – If you have a new address or a seasonal change of address, it is important that you let us know, as bulk mail is NOT forwarded.**



## Boys Day Out

### *The Boys Chairmen*

Our wonderful group of volunteers known as the Boys Day Out Group have been slowed down just a bit by the bitter cold weather and the snow that just keeps piling up. They are an amazing group of volunteers who have given an astonishing number of man hours that keep this project going by completing so many jobs that need attention. Each homeowner knows what it takes to keep things in working order for their homestead and one can only imagine all of the things that need attention at the Thumb Agricultural Museum. We have four of the original buildings and nine new buildings that have been added to our site and they all have needs.

Some projects are being worked on by member volunteers off site, in heated out buildings. **Dennis Anderson, Jerry Auten, Martin Kubacki, Ron Kubacki and Lew Martin** have been working to get all the parts together for the three new people movers that we will need to move people from the parking areas to the grounds during our 20<sup>th</sup> Fall Family Days.

In anticipation of warmer weather they have put together a list of projects for 2015. Some are relatively simple and less time consuming while others are projects that will take considerable time and even require hiring outsiders to complete.

#### Here is the list of projects at this time and we know others will be added as the needs come up.

- ❖ Complete barn loft displays areas
- ❖ Caulk and paint windows on lower level of Barn
  - ❖ Install lighting in the Cider Mill
- ❖ Work on ridge vent on Cider Mill Building
  - ❖ Install lighting in new storage building
- ❖ Complete signs for equipment along the tree line
  - ❖ Build 3 people movers
  - ❖ Repair picnic tables
- ❖ Install screen doors and clothes line for the Purdy Home
  - ❖ Repair flooring in the attic of the Purdy Home
  - ❖ Level gates in front of the Barn
- ❖ Design new gates at the Purdy Home & Octagon Barn entrance
  - ❖ Finish trim around kitchen area in the Munro Building
  - ❖ Build serving table for Munro Building
  - ❖ Repair John Deere H
- ❖ Work on ridge vent in the Blacksmith Building
  - ❖ Replace the Barn roof



**Becky Bollon married Billy LaJoie** on September 20, 2014 in the arena of the Barn and certainly it is a beautiful setting for a wedding.

## Wedding Coordinator

Carolyn Sorenson, Chairperson

It seems that more and more young couples are discovering that the Octagon Barn is a very special place for them to begin their married lives. We already have six weddings scheduled for this summer I'm sure there will be more reserving a date on the calendar for their special occasion. Carolyn could use some help as it is necessary to have someone on site for the rehearsal generally the day before the wedding as well as several hours before and after the wedding. If you would be able to work with Carolyn and the wedding couple, please give Carolyn a call at **989-912-0449**. This number can also be used to inquire about scheduling a wedding or with questions.



## Newsletter Team

**Lois Moslander**, Cass City, has been volunteering her time and, most importantly, her talent to do the Design Layout for the newsletter since 2003 and does an amazing job. She receives pages of narrative and stacks of pictures and then works her magic to put it all in newsletter form. Thank you for volunteering to make the newsletter look so attractive. Shown above, Lois is busy in her computer room at work on the Friends Newsletter.

## Lonesome Mountain Boys Concert

*David Jaroch & Richard Wroblewski, Co-Chairmen*

The Lonesome Mountain Boys will be returning for another pleasant, summer afternoon of music and fun. The date has been set for **Sunday, July 19, 2015**. The concert runs from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. with an intermission halfway through when there will be tasty treats prepared by the Friends for guests to enjoy. A donation of \$5.00 per person is suggested with children under 12 admitted free. Gate receipts will be supplemented with funds from Huron County Chapter of Thrivent Financial. Proceeds will go towards on-going improvements to the Thumb Agricultural Museum.



The Boys are busy entertaining the crowd during last years concert when 250 or more enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon at the Thumb Octagon Barn. The Lonesome Mountain Boys are from the left: **Bill Brasgalla & Ron Smolka** of Livonia and **Richard Wroblewski** from Sebewaing.

### Newsletter

Database and labels.....David Eichler  
Editing.....Bob Hirn  
Design Layout.....Lois Moslander  
Newsletter Coordinator.....Margaret Sergeant

## Museum Committee

Doug Monroe, Chairman

The committee is continuing to develop museum displays in the main and loft areas of the barn. We are looking for interested volunteers to help clear the north loft for a Buggy display, update the other displays on the loft and to help with the update of the displays on the main floor. Contact Doug at 989-665-9948.

The theater concept in the arena area of the barn is progressing and we will add a narrative of the House to our present programming.

There will be two new information signs installed this year, one in front of the Grain Elevator Building and one in front of the Blacksmith Shop.

A committee has been formed to produce a Historical DVD of the Octagon Barn from origin to today. This will be a for sale item to help in the on going cost of maintaining our site. We are desperately looking for any pictures any one has of harvesting, threshing, or storing product on the farm in the 20's, 30's or 40's. Also, we are looking for any animal activity or general life activity from that era. This is an urgent request as we want to complete the project in mid to late summer. If anyone can help us with these requests, please contact Doug Monroe or any barn volunteer and we will try to get it into the DVD production.



During FFD, visitors gathered in the arena of the Barn to view a presentation of the history and unique features of Mr. Purdy's air castle. Who better to tell the story of the Octagon Barn than our very own Barn historian, **Bob Hirn**, who volunteered many hours of labor along with others to bring the Barn back to its original form. The video was produced by **Al & Dave Eicher** of Program Source International. They are the group that will also be producing the DVD of the history of our complete project from the beginning to the present.

## Site Committee

Dennis Anderson, Chairman

Denny reports on the very exciting news about the Grain Elevator.

Thanks to the hard work of **Louis and Linda Wehrman** the grain elevator has become a popular venue at the Thumb Octagon Barn. We can be proud of the work they have done in telling the story of the historical significance grain elevators played in this country. They have not only organized a professional and highly educational program but have secured new volunteers that come to assist with the operation of the elevator.

The size of the present elevator is 768 sq. ft. The need for more room has

been shared from the beginning of the operation of the elevator in 2008. The elevator is an operational exhibit as well as a museum that contains numerous displays, historical documents and elevator artifacts.

Thanks to a private donation, we will be able add an addition onto the elevator. The addition will allow the grist mill to be under roof cover, and needed room for the operation of the elevator and space for visitors to see the exhibits will be added. We will start the project in the spring and it will be open at Fall Family Days in Sept. 2015.

## Grounds

Louie Wehrman, Chairman

Louie has set **Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 9:00 a.m.** as our **Clean-up Day** to prepare for the opening of the Thumb Agricultural Museum to the public and School Tours, May 6, 7 and 8. There is much to do and we can always find a job for everyone who is willing to volunteer to spend some time cleaning. Louie suggests that you might want to bring a friend to help with the cleaning and perhaps then they might become one of our new volunteers. **Marilyn Phillips, Purdy Home Chairperson, is putting out a special request for helpers to join her on Clean up Day in the Purdy Home as she really needs help cleaning the very large home of James & Cora Purdy.** Louie suggests that those responsible for an area make a list of tasks needing attention and then marking them off when completed. It is also helpful for folks to bring supplies that will be needed for cleaning windows, walls, floors and the grounds. Also if you are able to volunteer into the afternoon, you will need to bring your lunch. **We will clean regardless of the weather.**

## MUSEUM DONATIONS

Gerald Auten, Museum Records

**PLEASE NOTE: When donating items for our museum, please be sure to fill out a Museum Donation Form so that we will have the item in our records and can acknowledge your gift in our newsletter.**

The following donations have been made to the Thumb Agricultural Museum since our last newsletter.

- Bryan & Janet Phillips, Dearborn, MI donated a 1925 phone directory from Renovo, PA and a Kellogg brand, oak, hand crank wall phone.
- Timothy Tamara, Marlette, MI donated a dresser scarf, left hand Oliver plow, crazy quilt and shadow pictures.
- Bill & Janet Redford, Owendale, MI donated a wooden desk with a flip-down area.
- Anthony & Constance Nowicki, Novi, MI donated a 939 Farmall A tractor.
- James Forbes, Reese, MI donated a pipe stand vise.
- Jack & Barbara Worthington, Grand Ledge, MI donated a board with horse bits.



Mary M. Downing, Gagetown, MI donated three 1911 Bunny Brown and his Sister Sue Ivy Hall stories for the One Room Country School. Mary hand delivered her treasures that are in excellent condition. She loved these books and was so happy to find a good home for them.

## Wanted Tea Party Chairman

Do you love to throw parties? Now is your chance! The duties include arranging to host three parties during the summer months. The chairman may organize each party or ask willing volunteers to host. A generous budget is available. The tea parties may be as simple as deserts or a full luncheon. We ask that each party has a theme and a lesson in topics from antiques to gardening, to old-time fashion, to music, or just something fun and entertaining. Some dishes and tableware in the house are available for use. Contact Marilyn Phillips at 989-665-0210 or Rose Putnam 959-550-0693 if you are interested.

**Friends of the  
THUMB OCTAGON BARN  
PO BOX 145  
6948 RICHIE RD.  
GAGETOWN MI 48735**

**989-665-0081**

Non-Profit Org.  
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Permit No. 3

### We're on the Web!

<http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org>  
**George Pettinger,**  
*Web Manager*

### FUTURE MEETINGS

General membership meetings will be held the second Tuesday, every other month, at 7 p.m. at the Gagetown Fire Hall.

**Feb., April, Oct. & Dec.**

**The June & August meetings will be held in the Munro Building on site.**

### 2015 Upcoming Events

*Additional information about all of these events and reservation deadlines can be found throughout the newsletter or can be obtained from our web site at [www.thumboctagonbarn.org](http://www.thumboctagonbarn.org)*

April 11	Annual Meeting/Banquet & Auction, 5 p.m.
May 2	Spring Clean-up, 9 a.m.
May 6, 7 & 8	School Tours by reservation only
June 27 & 28	Countywide Museum Open House Weekend
July 19	Lonesome Mountain Boys Concert in the Barn, 2 p.m.
September 11	Annual Fish Fry Dinner, 4-7 p.m. in the Munro Bldg.
September 12 & 13	20 <sup>th</sup> Fall Family Days 8 a.m.-5 p.m. each day

### SPECIAL DONATIONS:

*Following is a list of memorial donations, acknowledgements and items donated for use on the site.*

Ken & Arlene Musser, Kawkawlin, MI donated in honor of their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. "We both so love the Barn. Never missed a FFD. Keep up the good work."

Donation in memory of Edith, William & Gladys Toner given by Willa J. Vargas, Bellevue, NE

Modern Woodmen of America donated \$2,500 in matching funds of the profit of the Fish Supper.

The Saginaw Valley Beekeeper Association held their summer picnic with all the Beekeepers of Michigan at the Thumb Octagon Barn. They enjoyed our facility and the experience and therefore made a donation.

Karl & Marilyn DeSimpelare, Unionville, MI donated towards a 2015 FFD Sponsor.

Donation in memory of Deanne Corbishley given by Evelyn Schadd, Filion, MI

Donation in memory of John Ohanian given by Owendale Class of 1953.

Donation in honor of Pat Hester, Cass City given by Brad & Beth Kitchin, Mesa, AZ, her son and daughter-in-law.

Donation in memory of Dorothy Jean Bills given by her "across the ditch neighbor" Margaret Sergeant, Gagetown.

Donations in memory of Norma Baur, Sebewaing were given by: Joyce Schwartz, Unionville, MI, John & Carol DeSimpelare, Unionville, MI, Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Baur, Westerville, OH, The Jacksons, Caro, MI, Curtis & Ruth Reminder, Bay City, MI, Raymond Baur & Family, Unionville, MI, C. B. Herman & S. W. Howard, Ormond Beach, FL, Diane Rapson Gabil, Essexville, MI & Terri & Charles Baur, Reese, MI

House Volunteer **Norma Baur** of Sebewaing passed away suddenly. Raymond E. Baur, Norma's husband wrote in a letter to the Friends. "Norma always looked forward to and enjoyed working in the Purdy House for School Tours and Fall Family Days in September. She especially enjoyed working with Marilyn and her "crew". She was a people person who would "visit" with everyone who came thru the house. I always heard many tales when she came home of those she worked with and those who went through the House. She is now looking down, visiting with those who have been to the Octagon Barn and scolding those who did not get there."

### Weekly Updates

David Jaroch, Messenger

David sends out messages updating interested members about what is happening at the Barn and the projects that folks are working on. He has done this faithfully for a number of years. It's a great way to stay in touch and stay on top of things at the Thumb Agricultural Museum. You too can receive these updates if you aren't getting them already. It's very simple. Just email Dave at [tdjaroch@yahoo.com](mailto:tdjaroch@yahoo.com) and tell him you'd like to be included along with the hundred or so others that receive his updates on a weekly basis.

Thanks, Dave

**BENEFACTORS:** *The following have made a donation of \$10.00 or more since our last newsletter through Feb. 21, 2015.*

Danny & Patricia Allen, Deford, MI  
Anonymous Donor  
Bob Ashmore, Owendale, MI  
Tom Barton, St. Clair Shores, MI  
Bernard & Patty Billingsley, Sanford, MI  
Louise Buehrly, Palmetto, FL  
Ray Christie, Freeland, MI  
Thomas & Elizabeth Fritz, Gagetown, MI

Bonnie Gaeth, Owendale, MI  
John Gallagher, Carsonville, MI  
W. Steve & Karen Hamlin, South Haven, MI  
Dorothea Hass, Brookline, MA  
Neal J. Hentschl, Harbor Beach, MI  
Mike & Jan Holik, Caro, MI  
Tom & Jane Johnson, Williamston, MI  
Walter Kloc, Deford, MI

Stanley & Rita Knopf, Marlette, MI  
Tim & Debbie Kubacki, Sebewaing, MI  
Elizabeth Lambert, Kingston, MI  
Fran Lovejoy, Cass City, MI  
Donna T. Lowe, Bay City, MI  
Ken & Theresa Micklash, Cass City, MI  
David & Jane Morse, Cass City, MI  
Charles Pilgrim, Owendale, MI

Mike & Drucilla Pisarek, Cass City, MI  
Nicholas Posak, Saint Clair, MI  
Jim & Barbara Prill, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI  
Judy Ann Rau, Reese, MI  
Dorothy (Dotty) Scollon, Cass City, MI  
Susan Scott, Saginaw, MI  
Mark Schubel, Caro, MI  
Charles Snyder, Lincoln, MI